



PLANNING BOARD
TOWN OF EAST KINGSTON
New Hampshire

2010-2011
David F. Sullivan, Chairman
Ron Morales, Vice Chairman

MINUTES
Regular Meeting 17 June 2010
7:00 pm

AGENDA:

- ◆ **Call to Order**
- ◆ **Approval** of May 13 and May 20 minutes
- ◆ **Board Business**

CALL TO ORDER: The work meeting of the East Kingston Planning Board was called to order at 7:00 pm.

ROLL CALL: Mrs. White called the roll.

Members: Dr. RA Marston, Mr. D Sullivan, Mr. D Pendell. Mr. E Warren and Mr. R. Morales were not in attendance.

Alternates: Mr. P. Gilligan. Mr. J. Cacciatore and Mr. R. Forrest were not in attendance.

Advisors: Ms. Julie LaBranche

Other: East Kingston resident Nancy Reis

Mr. Sullivan opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

The Chairman appointed Mr. Gilligan as a voting member in place of Mr. Warren.

The first item on the agenda was to approve the minutes of June 10. The Chairman asked if there were any additions or changes; there were none. Mr. Sullivan asked for a motion of approval.

MOTION: Mr. Gilligan **MOVED** to approve the June 10 minutes as presented. Dr. Marston seconded. The motion passed. Mr. Pendell abstained as he was not present.

BOARD BUSINESS

Review of Letter to Farmers. The Board reviewed the letter to the farmers Mrs. White had crafted and approved it as written with the exception of the introductory paragraph. It was suggested the wording be clarified to note this was a meeting to solicit volunteers for a committee to investigate if there was any interest for the formation of an Agricultural Commission in East Kingston.

Mr. Pendell suggested including on the distribution list people with acreage, as they might be interested in leasing out their land. He also opined that some people from the general public who were not farmers, but might have been farmers previously, might be interested and have a wealth of knowledge to share. There might also be others who were not farmers, but would be interested in serving on the committee because they believed an Agricultural Commission would be a good thing for the Town. Ms. LaBranche thought the notice should be widely distributed amongst the general population so that anyone who is interested could participate.

Mrs. White explained this letter was being sent to the farmers in town to see if they were interested in volunteering for the committee to investigate if there was interest in forming an agricultural commission. Those Mr. Pendell was suggesting seemed would be more appropriate to contact after the committee had been formed. Mrs. Reis opined that people with acreage might be interested in starting a nursery.

Mr. Gilligan opined that once the committee was formed, he was sure that more interested parties would come forth with ideas that would be useful. The Board agreed to start, they think a committee of 8 people would be a good number to be able to schedule compatible meeting times.

Mr. Gilligan had met a person with a lot of knowledge on the subject who might agree to be a speaker, and that Mr. Morales might also have information to share.

In discussion regarding the duration of commitment for committee members, it was decided that would be a topic of discussion for the initial meeting rather than included in the invitation letter.

Mr. Pendell suggested posting the letter at the library and the town offices so everyone who was interested might participate. Mrs. White noted that she could reformat the first paragraph and remove the salutation so that it would read more as a notice than a letter. It was also discussed to put it up on the website and maybe even a flyer in the newspaper.

Ms. LaBranche noted they should put together a realistic set of activities for the committee to take on. Interview the farmers; what do they produce and where do they sell it. Do they have a market for everything they produce? Do they have an interest in selling locally? Are they interested in participating?

Mrs. White asked if there was another town that had done this that they could “borrow” their process rather than reinventing the wheel. Ms. LaBranche will check on this.

Mr. Gilligan noted zoning would need to be changed to be more farm friendly. Ms. LaBranche will ask the Building Inspector if there is a uniform building code for residences and farm buildings.

Where to hold the meeting was discussed, and the Town Hall was decided to be the best place because of parking. Ms. LaBranche will let the Board know what dates she is available, and Mrs. White will revamp the letter for a final vote at the July 8th work meeting.

Ms. LaBranche offered to act as facilitator for the meeting. Mrs. White will send her the farmer letter and she will revamp the heading to be used as a notice. The date of the meeting was set for Thursday, August 12. Mrs. White will check on the availability of the Town Hall. If it is not available, they will have the meeting at the Pound School.

Letter to the Selectmen

The Board reviewed the letter to the Selectmen regarding Carmen's restaurant. The Board wanted to let the Selectmen know the reasons for their decision not to bring them before them. She had checked again with the LGC and they reiterated the RSAs did not give the Planning Board the authority to require a site plan review for a change of tenancy; only for a change of use. As Carmen's was still a restaurant, there is no change of use.

MOTION: Mr. Pendell **MOVED** to approve the letter as written to be signed. Mr. Sullivan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Sullivan signed the letter; Mrs. White gave it to Mr. Pendell, who will present it at the Selectmen's meeting on Monday, June 21. He will make a copy for Mrs. White for her file.

Mrs. White noted the regulation will need to be changed and the phrase "*including change of tenants*" will need to be taken out of the two places it appears; the change would require a public hearing.

In discussion, Mrs. Reis asked wasn't the restaurant asking to serve alcohol on the deck? Mr. Pendell answered that was a separate issue and had nothing to do with the Planning Board. The Selectmen would contact the Liquor Commission if they had any concerns, but the receiving of the actual liquor license was between the people who run the restaurant and the Liquor Commission.

Mr. Hinz's Letter

Mrs. White responded to Mr. Hinz's second bullet and let Mrs. Reis know that information was referred to on the website as being available from the Selectmen's Office.

Mr. Sullivan asked Mrs. Reis if she had any questions or information to offer in regard to the letter.

Mrs. Reis noted that from research on potential tax revenue, it appeared that all the towns are up the creek. East Kingston receives \$2,000 from the local businesses in Town, but any profits that businesses make go to the state and the towns do not get any benefit. Businesses pay 150% in taxes because they are a business, but the properties are so little they truly do not make any impact.

Noting that the utilities appear to be making the bulk of the money, she suggested that perhaps a wind farm could be located on Town property to generate some revenue. This might make an impact rather than small businesses along a strip that might not have any impact at all. Truthfully, she surmised, the only way Towns will get any money is if New Hampshire has a state tax. No one wants that, but it seems to be the only way.

She was wondering why the Planning Board was still considering a business district when no one has come up with any amount of money that would be gleaned from it.

Mr. Pendell remarked that he was the one who was mostly spear-heading the expanded business district, and noted that no more revenue would be realized until someone actually put in a business on the property with-in the business district. A piece of property that was now worth \$50,000 could potentially be worth \$200,000 once there was a profitable business on it and taxed at a higher rate. That would make more money for the Town. Making an expanded business district could open up the possibility for someone to make a good profit if a business such as Dunkin' Donuts was interested in coming into Town, and the Town would realize more income in taxes if the property sold for half a million \$ as opposed to \$200,000.

Mrs. Reis opined that no one in Town wanted non-rural/agricultural, so why was the Planning Board still pursuing that issue? Mr. Pendell noted that only 40 people showed up to the mini-charette, and felt that was not truly representative of the entire Town's opinion. The Planning Board was trying to put something together to put forth to the voters to see if they are willing to consider it. Mr. Pendell stated that the 200 parents on the soccer field had a vastly different opinion of what they would like to see happen in Town than the 40 people to showed up to the charette. He hoped a vote on the ballot for this would be an opportunity to have more people participate and share they opinions of what they would like to see in Town.

Mrs. Reis was concerned with monitoring of what a business district would look like; what would happen if there were no rules they would need to abide by? What would happen with enforcement? It appears to her there needs to be a lot of planning up front before you make changes like what you are proposing. And what about any alternatives available such as a wind farm, which is much more agricultural than a Dunkin' Donuts? Mr. Pendell offered the idea of a solar array. Dr. Marston opined the Town would not vote for a cell tower, so he did not have much hope they would vote for a wind farm.

Mr. Pendell emphasized that whatever the Town chose to do, it would need to be something that would increase the value of the property for the Town to benefit from increased taxes. He iterated that the Board was disappointed at the results of the mini-charette, as they thought they would have ended up with some sort of plan to start with.

Mrs. Reis's take on the results of the charette was that they couldn't solve their problem the way they were thinking. They needed to build cultural cohesion like the people on the soccer field, the farmers or those people who attended Planning Board meetings on a regular basis. You couldn't just throw something out there without a plan. She did not think that a questionnaire would be beneficial at all.

She was very concerned that there would be no regulation as to what any of the buildings would look like should they expand the business district. Mrs. White reminded the Board that there are specific parameters within the Town Center District of what the buildings could look like, and they could probably set the same parameters about what they would like new buildings to look like in an expanded business district. Mrs. Reis was also concerned with enforcement.

Mr. Pendell noted enforcement would be the responsibility of the Building Inspector / Code Enforcement Officer. Also, before anyone was to build anything new, they would need to come before the Planning Board for a Site Plan Review.

Mr. Pendell agreed that they needed to have a plan. Much like what they were going to put together for the farmers for the agricultural commission, they also needed to put something together for the business people and potential commercial people in Town; a place to start from and a direction to go toward.

Ms. LaBranche agreed that there would not be a lot of response gleaned from a survey; survey results are traditionally very low. They already know how the people who participated in the charette feel, so most likely another session would not be that beneficial. She suggested putting a proposal together to present to the townspeople.

Scope of Work

Ms. LaBranche noted that implementing the scope of work would come under the Transportation Grant, but it would take an 80/20 match and the Planning Board did not have \$2,000 in their budget. She thought the scope of work would cost about \$10,000; \$2,000 Town money and the rest grant money. Ms. LaBranche will put together a proposal with a preliminary evaluation of where the deficits/problems lie and some solutions.

Mr. Gilligan asked if they were considering an office park. Ms. LaBranche noted that could be included, but it would need to be in a business district and not the light industrial park. They could also promote the unused portion of the light industrial park more.

Mr. Gilligan spoke to Stratham's Town Planner in Stratham to find out what kind of impact the industrial/retail commercial areas had on their tax base and found out it was approximately 15%. East Kingston does not have the amenities to offer as some other towns do - town water/sewer, etc. so they could not expect the return to be quite as significant. Mr. Pendell also noted that at the present time, there is only one close restaurant where workers could eat. Mr. Gilligan opined sometimes those amenities follow industries.

MOTION: Mr. Pendell **MOVED** for Ms. LaBranche to put together a preliminary proposal to present to the Selectmen in an effort to obtaining matching grant money. Mr. Sullivan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. LaBranche noted that if they got the transportation grant, they could produce a product much like that the full-blown charette did for Newton. One of her recommendations will be to form an economic development committee, as the Planning Board cannot do all the work themselves.

MOTION: Dr. Marston **MOVED** the Planning Board adjourn. Mr. Pendell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Sullivan closed the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara White

Barbara A. White
Recording Secretary

David Sullivan
Chairman

Minutes approved July 15, 2010